**Real Life**

“You only live once”, “In the end its not going to matter how many breaths you took, but how many moments took your breath away” “What will be, will be”, “Seize the day”. These are familiar sayings for life, sayings that attempt to inspire us how to live, sayings to give purpose to our lives, and to remind us what to LIVE for.

But this is Real life, these sayings and phrases are nice, they’re catchy, but in this real life we don’t always have time to seize the day, sometimes were just trying to survive the day, to get through it, what will be more often than not is problems, chaos, too much work, pain, driving to 4 different soccer practices, divorce, death, and a million other things. But real life isn’t always bad; there is love, laughter, joy, babies’ first words, success, vacations, new clothes, sports, TV shows to watch, cheeseburgers and a million other things. Real life is a mix of good times, bad times and everything in between.

So it begs the question, what’s the purpose, what’s it all about, what are we living for? Are you living for whatever will bring you your version of success, whatever helps elevate your status? Are you living for more stuff, nicer things, more processions, or are you living to be known, to see and be seen? Are you living just to feel alive, or are you living from just one thing to the next, whatever comes your way. Our world tells us that real life is all about improvement, and getting the next best thing.

If there was anything to ever live for, it is to improve your-self. After all it is only logical to think that you only live once and if you’re going to be here, why would you not want what is best for you? Go out; get the best education, the best job, that way you can get the best house, the best car, and the best clothes. To live is to acquire and to provide as much as you can for your physical self and your needs and you better make sure it is the newest, top of the line thing there is. But we’re not always so selfish, sometimes we want the best for others too, so we get our children the best clothes, the best education, after all what kind of parent wouldn’t want the best life for their child? And while wanting the best for yourself and your children is not bad, the motive and the desire behind it might be.

So how do we determine what is worth living for, what is the best life, or what is the life that we should be living? Do we look at others, they look happy, they got it together I need what they got then I’m really living. When we live to please our self or others, we find that we are never really satisfied with this type of life.

*Philippians 1:21 says, “for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”*

**[TESTIMONY here]**
To live is Christ. Simply put, REAL LIFE is to live for Christ and to live for Christ is to live for others. Paul states in verse 20, “***20****I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”* Paul knew that he would never be put to shame when it came to living for Christ. He followed this by saying that to live is to do the work of Christ: To share the Gospel of Christ and to bear the fruit of that message.

In this 4 word phrase, “to live is Christ” We are told that living for Christ is conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel message, we live for this very purpose: To stand together as a community of believers, fighting for the faith not with closed fists, but with open hands. Hands open to the spirit’s bidding and hands open to serving one another. Lives dedicated to spreading the Gospel message.

Spreading the Gospel message isn’t just for missionaries. Each one of us has been called to live for Christ. Each one of us has been invited in this partnership with Christ, in which we bring the good news of Christ’s life, death, resurrection and the forgiveness of sins that he offers. We live this good news out with our lives, our words, and our deeds. As disciples of Jesus we offer the REAL LIFE that Jesus gives. A life that does not promise that everything is going to be OK, that once you become a Christian there will be no more sadness, no more loss. But a life that is filled, a life that becomes abundant because of what Christ offers, purpose and a life lived in Him.

Remember, in all of this Christ has given his life for ours. He lived his life for us. Only faith in Christ will sustain us in our times of adversity, the times when real life brings suffering and trials. We learn from Christ that our purpose of living goes beyond providing for our own physical needs, but in serving and providing for others. Just like he does for us.

One final thought on this verse is the very last part: “To die is gain”. In a world that looks at death as the end, Paul here tells us the opposite, that to die is to gain. As a follower of Jesus Christ, we know that death is not something to be feared. Instead we have great confidence because Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in him, will live even though they die. We like Paul can say to die is gain, only because of Jesus Christ. We are promised an eternity with Him. An eternity with Him in which we will stand in front of God’s throne and serve him day and night in his temple, and He will give us shelter, we will never be hungry, or thirsty, or scorched by the heat of the sun, but He will be our shepherd; leading us to springs of life giving water and he will wipe away every tear from our eyes.